Vol. 4 No. 2 October*November*December 2000

WET EFFECTS

(Formerly River's Digest)

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GUESS WHAT?

Yes, I am changing things again. This time it's the name of the newsletter and the format. This newsletter will feature more activities and less text, so that teachers can simply use the newsletter more as a teaching tool.

Attention:

If you did not receive a newsletter for the last quarter (June-July-August 2000), don't worry; I didn't create one. I was busy doing other stuff.

Activity Number 1
(Science-Animal Groups)

At various seasons animals tend to travel or congregate in groups. Have your students learn about the different group names of various animals.

See page 3 for activity.

Do Fish Drink?

Yes, they do! However, they do not drink water very often. Some fish will swallow water when they open and close their mouths. It may appear that they are drinking, but they're really breathing.

In fact, freshwater fish (those that live in rivers, streams and ponds) drink very little, but they do swallow some water when they open their mouths to eat. Freshwater fish get most of the water they need through their skin. On the flip side, saltwater fish will swallow more water because the salty water makes them thirsty. Actually, they loose more water through their skin because of the salt in the water.

Activity Number 2:
(Math-Science Combo)

Have students think on the topic of water. The earth is a water planet, but water is not limitless. We must use it, conserve it, and protect its quality.

Share and discuss with your students some statistics about water. Between two-thirds and three-fourths of the earth's surface is water. Share with your students the following statistics:

Water on Earth

Oceans = 97.2%
All icecaps/glaciers = 2.0%
Groundwater = 0.62%
Freshwater lakes = 0.009%
Inland seas/salt lakes = 0.008%
Atmosphere = 0.001%
All rivers = 0.0001%

Total 99.8381%

See page 4 for this activity.

Creature Feature

Earthworm
(Lumbricus terrestris)

Fish love ‘em! Gardeners love ‘em! And, birds love ‘em too! These wiggly creatures are one of Planet Earth’s best recyclers. Earthworms eat mostly decaying plant and animal matter, but will also eat bits of leaves and roots. However, earthworms cannot bite because they have neither teeth nor jaws. The worms surround their food and pass it through their tube-like bodies as they crawl through soil. Tunneling through soil allows air and water to circulate which makes the soil loose and easy to plow. Their tunneling can take them to depths up to ten feet, but only in very rich soils. The waste produced by earthworms is called castings; it makes a fabulous fertilizer. In the winter, worms can go dormant for several weeks and lose more than half their weight in water.

The fat band that surrounds its body is called the saddle. It serves a very important function in reproduction. When worms mate, the saddle (which contains eggs) will slide forward until it comes completely off. The saddle (egg cocoon) will remain in the soil for about two to three weeks when about five little earthworms will emerge.

There are other interesting tidbits about these wigglers that you might not know. For example, they do not have lungs, but breathe through their skin. They do not have eyes, but have special cells that sense light and darkness. They are made up of protein and water. Their main predator is the mole, but toads love ‘em too! In fact, the tidbit to follow is one I found quite interesting. The Australian earthworm averages about eleven feet in length! Imagine what kind of fish you can catch with this worm.

Activity 1

(Taken from Ranger Rick National Wildlife Federation© magazine, January 1998 article, by Diane Hess and illustration by Danielle Jones)

What do you call a Bunch of Baboons?

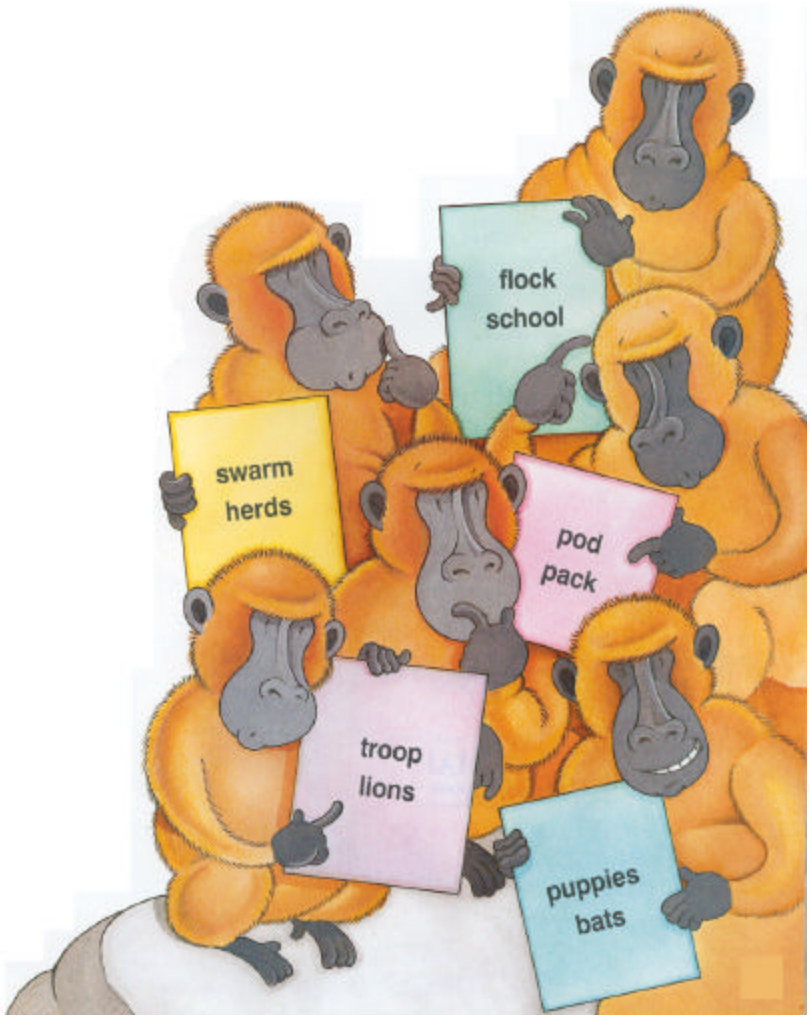
Directions: Complete the following poem about animal groups. Fill in the blank by using the words the baboons are showing on their cards.

What do you call
a bunch of baboons?
For wolves, it's a pack;
A _____for the birds.
Kangaroos come in mobs;
For bison, it's _____.

But what do you call
a bunch of baboons?
It's a _____of fish
And a _____of gnats;
A pride of _____
And a colony of _____.

But what do you call
a bunch of baboons?
A litter of _____
A _____of whales,
A _____of dogs,
And a covey of quails.

So what do you call
a bunch of baboons?
A bunch of baboons
can be called a group,
But some people like to
Call them a _____.



Answers: The correct order of answers is the following: flock, herds, school, swarm, lions, bats, puppies, pod, pack, troop.

Activity 2

(Modified from Project Aquatic Wild©1992)

Teacher: After sharing the water statistics on page 1(one) and emphasizing that the usable percentage of existing freshwater is reduced by pollution and contaminants, remind students that all groundwater is not available for use and icecaps/glaciers are not readily available for use. Place five gallons of water in an aquarium, then tell your students how much water is in the aquarium. Give your students the statistics on page 1 (one) and the following formula:

5 gallons = 1280 tablespoons

Directions: Have students assume that five (5) gallons of water represents all the water on Earth. Ask them to calculate the volume for the following:

Oceans	X tablespoons
Icecaps/Glaciers	X tablespoons
Groundwater	X tablespoons
Freshwater Lakes	X tablespoons
Inland seas/salt lakes	X tablespoons
Atmosphere	X tablespoons
Rivers	X tablespoons
	_____
TOTAL	1280 tablespoons

Teacher: Extract the amount of water represented by all freshwater lakes and rivers (0.111 tablespoon) have the students consider the fragile nature of freshwaters, wetlands and oceans. Close by emphasizing the importance of keeping the earth's water clean and healthy for our use and use by other living creatures for survival.

Answers: The correct answers for the above problems are: oceans (1244.16 tablespoons), Icecap/glaciers (25.60 tablespoons), groundwater (7.93 tablespoons), freshwater lakes (0.11 tablespoons), inland seas/salt lakes (0.1 tablespoons), atmosphere (0.0128 tablespoons), and rivers (0.0012 tablespoons).